

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 (currently amended). A gaming method comprising:

receiving a value amount to initially define a value total;

causing a video image representing a game to be generated, said video image representing one of the following games: video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo,

said video image comprising an image of at least five playing cards if said game comprises video poker,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said game comprises video slots,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video blackjack,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said game comprises video keno, and

said video image comprising an image of a bingo grid if said game comprises video bingo;

deducting a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image and independent of input from a player;

determining based on the fee a value payout associated with an outcome of said game represented by said video image; and

adding the value payout to the value total.

2 (original). The gaming method according to claim 1, comprising deducting a fixed fee periodically from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

3 (original). The gaming method according to claim 1, comprising interrupting for a period of time the deducting of a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

4 (currently amended). A gaming method comprising:
receiving a value amount to initially define a value total;
causing a video image to be generated, the video image representing a game including at least one value-generating event;
deducting a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image and independent of input from a player;
determining based on the fee a value payout associated with the at least one value-generating events; and
adding the value payout to the value total.

5 (original). The gaming method according to claim 4, comprising deducting a fixed fee periodically from the value total independent said game represented by said video image.

6 (original). The gaming method according to claim 4, comprising causing a video image to be generated, the video image representing a game comprising a plurality of game piece images.

7 (original). The gaming method according to claim 6, comprising displaying a value amount when the player selects one of the game piece images from the plurality of game piece images.

8 (original). The gaming method according to claim 7, comprising determining a value payout when the player selects one of the game piece images from the plurality of game piece images.

9 (original). The gaming method according to claim 7, comprising determining a value payout prior to when the player selects one of the game piece images from the plurality of game piece images.

10 (original). The gaming method according to claim 7, comprising displaying value amounts for the game piece images of the plurality of game piece images other than the one of the game piece images after displaying the value amount.

11 (original). The gaming method according to claim 6, comprising displaying a value amount when one of the game piece images from the plurality of game piece images is automatically selected.

12 (original). The gaming method according to claim 4, comprising interrupting for a period of time the deducting of a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video images.

13 (original). The gaming method according to claim 4, comprising causing a video image to be generated, said video image representing one of the following games: video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo,

said video image comprising an image of at least five playing cards if said game comprises video poker,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said game comprises video slots,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video blackjack,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said game comprises video keno, and

said video image comprising an image of a bingo grid if said game comprises video bingo.

14 (currently amended). A gaming method comprising:

receiving a value amount to initially define a value total;

causing a video image to be generated, said video image representing a video slots game and comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels, each of said slot machine reels having a plurality of slot machine symbols;

deducting a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said video slots game represented by said video image and independent of input from a player;

determining based on the fee a value payout associated with an outcome of said video slots game represented by said video image, said outcome of said video slots game based on a configuration of said slot machine symbols; and

adding the value payout to the value total.

15 (original). The gaming method according to claim 14, comprising deducting a fixed fee periodically from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

16 (original). The gaming method according to claim 14, comprising interrupting for a period of time the deducting of a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

17 (currently amended). A gaming apparatus comprising:

a display unit that is capable of generating video images;

a value input device;

a controller operatively coupled to said display unit and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,

said controller being programmed to allow a person to enter a value amount to initially define a value total,

said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image representing one of the following games: video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo,

said video image comprising an image of at least five playing cards if said game comprises video poker,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said game comprises video slots,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video blackjack,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said game comprises video keno,

said video image comprising an image of a bingo grid if said game comprises video bingo,

said controller being programmed to deduct a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image and independent of input from a player;

said controller being programmed to determine based on the fee deducted a value payout associated with an outcome of said game represented by said video image; and

said controller being programmed to add the value payout to the value total.

18 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 17, said controller being programmed to deduct a fixed fee periodically from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

19 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 17, said controller being programmed to interrupt for a period of time the deducting of a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

20 (original). A gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming apparatuses as defined in claim 17, said gaming apparatuses being interconnected to form a network of gaming apparatuses.

21 (original). A gaming system as defined in claim 20, wherein said gaming apparatuses are interconnected via the Internet.

22 (currently amended). A gaming apparatus comprising:

a display unit that is capable of generating video images;

a value input device;

a controller operatively coupled to said display unit and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,

said controller being programmed to allow a person to enter a value amount to initially define a value total,

said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image representing a game including at least one value-generating event;

said controller being programmed to deduct a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image and independent of input from a player;

said controller being programmed to determine based on the fee a value payout associated with the at least one value-generating event; and

said controller being programmed to add the value payout to the value total.

23 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 22, said controller being programmed to deduct a fixed fee periodically from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

24 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 22, said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, the video image representing a game comprising a plurality of game piece images.

25 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 24, said controller being programmed to cause a value amount to be generated on said display unit when the player selects one of the game piece images from the plurality of game piece images.

26 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 25, said controller being programmed to determine a value payout when the player selects one of the game piece images from the plurality of game piece images.

27 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 25, said controller being programmed to determine a value payout prior to when the player selects one of the game piece images from the plurality of game piece images.

28 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 25, said controller being programmed to cause value amounts to be generated on said display unit for the game piece images of the plurality of game piece images other than the one of the game piece images after causing the value amount to be generated on said display unit.

29 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 24, said controller being programmed to cause a value amount to be generated on said display unit when one of the game piece images from the plurality of game piece images is automatically selected.

30 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 22, said controller being programmed to interrupt for a period of time the deducting of a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

31 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 22, said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image representing one of the following games: video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo,

said video image comprising an image of at least five playing cards if said game comprises video poker,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said game comprises video slots,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video blackjack,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said game comprises video keno, and

said video image comprising an image of a bingo grid if said game comprises video bingo.

32 (original). A gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming apparatuses as defined in claim 22, said gaming apparatuses being interconnected to form a network of gaming apparatuses.

33 (original). A gaming system as defined in claim 22, wherein said gaming apparatuses are interconnected via the Internet.

34 (currently amended). A gaming apparatus comprising:

- a display unit that is capable of generating video images;
- a value input device;
- a controller operatively coupled to said display unit and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,
- said controller being programmed to allow a person to enter a value amount to initially define a value total,
- said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image representing a video slots game and comprising a plurality of simulated slot machine reels of a slots game, each of said slot machine reels having a plurality of slot machine symbols,
- said controller being programmed to deduct a fee at intervals from the value total independent of said video slots game represented by said video image and independent of input from a player;
- said controller being programmed to determine based on the fee a value payout associated with an outcome of said video slots game, said controller being programmed to

determine said outcome of said slots game based on a configuration of said slot machine symbols; and

said controller being programmed to add the value payout to the value total.

35 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 34, said controller being programmed to deduct a fixed fee periodically from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

36 (original). The gaming apparatus according to claim 34, said controller being programmed to interrupt for a period of time the deducting of a fee at intervals from the value total independent of play of said game represented by said video image.

37 (original). A gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming apparatuses as defined in claim 34, said gaming apparatuses being interconnected to form a network of gaming apparatuses.

38 (original). A gaming system as defined in claim 34, wherein said gaming apparatuses are interconnected via the Internet.

39 (currently amended). A computer-readable memory having a computer program stored therein, said computer program ~~being capable of being~~ used in connection with a gaming apparatus, said computer-readable memory comprising:

a first memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to allow a person to enter a value amount to initially define a value total;

a second memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to cause a video image to be generated on

a display unit, said video image representing one of the following games: video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo,

said video image comprising an image of at least five playing cards if said game comprises video poker,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said game comprises video slots,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video blackjack,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said game comprises video keno,

said video image comprising an image of a bingo grid if said game comprises video bingo;

a third memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to deduct a fee at intervals from the value total independent of said game represented by said video image and independent of input from a player;

a fourth memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to determine based on the fee deducted a value payout associated with an outcome of said game represented by said video image; and

a fifth memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to add the value payout to the value total.

40 (currently amended). A computer-readable memory having a computer program stored therein, said computer program ~~being capable of being~~ used in connection with a gaming apparatus, said computer-readable memory comprising:

a first memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to allow a person to enter a value amount to initially define a value total;

a second memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to cause a video image to be generated on a display unit, said video image representing a game including at least one value-generating event;

a third memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to deduct a fee at intervals from the value total independent of said game represented by said video image and independent of input from a player;

a fourth memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to determine based on the fee deducted a value payout associated with the at least one value-generating event; and

a fifth memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to add the value payout to the value total.

41 (currently amended). A computer-readable memory having a computer program stored therein, said computer program ~~being capable of being~~ used in connection with a gaming apparatus, said computer-readable memory comprising:

a first memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to allow a person to enter a value amount to initially define a value total;

a second memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to cause a video image to be generated on a display unit, said video image representing a video slots game and comprising a plurality of simulated slot machine reels of a slots game, each of said slot machine reels having a plurality of slot machine symbols;

a third memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to deduct a fee at intervals from the value total independent of said game represented by said video image and independent of input from a player;

a fourth memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to determine based on the fee deducted a value payout associated with an outcome of said slots game, said controller being programmed to determine said outcome of said slots game based on a configuration of said slot machine symbols; and

a fifth memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to add the value payout to the value total.